

Message Text

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PAGE 01 NEW DE 08729 051318Z
ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NEAE-00 ACDA-12 CIAE-00 INR-10
IO-14 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 EB-08 NRC-07 OES-07
SOE-02 DODE-00 DOE-15 SS-15 SP-02 CEQ-01 AID-05
PM-05 H-02 PA-02 ICA-20 JUSE-00 COME-00 AGRE-00
TRSE-00 AF-10 EUR-12 HA-05 OMB-01 /175 W
-----075300 051323Z /46

P R 051200Z JUN 78
FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2022
INFO AMCONSUL BOMBAY
AMCONSUL CALCUTTA
AMEMBASSY COLOMBO
AMEMBASSY DACCA
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
4USBLK/AMEMBASSY KABUL 4665
AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU
AMCONSUL MADRAS
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

UNCLAS NEW DELHI 8729

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PEPR TECH IN US
SUBJECT: PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT TO THE US: MEA BRIEFING

1. BRIEFING NEWSMEN ON JUNE 3RD, FOREIGN SECRETARY
JAGAT MEHTA (IDENTIFIED ONLY AS AN OFFICIAL IN THE JUNE 4
PRESS ACCOUNTS) STATED THAT THE NUCLEAR QUESTION WOULD
FIGURE PROMINENTLY IN PRIME MINISTER DESAI'S VISIT TO
THE U.S. THIS EMPHASIS WAS SAID TO BE OBVIOUS FROM THE
FACT THAT CHAIRMAN OF THE AEC SETHNA HAD BEEN INCLUDED
IN THE OFFICIAL DELEGATION FOR THE US PORTION OF THE
PM'S TRAVELS. WHILE INDIA WAS SAID TO RECOGNIZE THE
U.S. ADMINISTRATION'S DIFFICULTIES IN SUPPLYING THE
7.6 TONS OF NUCLEAR FUEL PROMISED BY PRESIDENT CARTER
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AND WAS ALSO AWARE OF THE RESTRICTIONS IMPOSED BY
RECENT US LEGISLATION, INDIA'S STAND ON THE NUCLEAR
QUESTION HAS NOT CHANGED. INDIA REGARDS THE MAINTAINANCE
OF THE TARAPUR FUEL SUPPLY AS A CONTRACTUAL
OBLIGATION. IF THE US RENEGED ON ITS OBLIGATION,
INDIA WOULD BE FREE TO SEEK ALTERNATIVE SOURCES INCLUDING
THE USE OF A MIXED OXIDE FUEL INVOLVING

URANIUM AND PLUTONIUM ("NATIONAL HERALD" ACCOUNT).
RESTRICTIONS IN THE NEW US LEGISLATION WOULD "ULTIMATELY
REDUCE INDIA TO THE STATUS OF ONLY AN OPERATOR OF ATOMIC
REACTORS. THEY WOULD MAKE ALL FUTURE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT
IN THIS COUNTRY IN THE USE OF NUCLEAR ENERGY
FOR PEACEFUL PURPOSES VIRTUALLY IMPOSSIBLE" ("TIMES OF
INDIA" ACCOUNT).

2. WHILE THE NUCLEAR FUEL QUESTION WOULD HAVE CONSIDERABLE
IMPORTANCE IN THE WASHINGTON TALKS, INDIA DOES NOT
WANT THIS ISSUE TO DOMINATE THE LARGER QUESTION OF INDO-
US RELATIONS. ECONOMIC AID AND FOOD SUPPLIES ARE NO
LONGER BILATERAL ISSUES; NEW AVENUES OF COOPERATION WERE
SAID TO BE OPENING UP, AND PRESIDENT CARTER'S INTEREST IN
GOI PROGRAMS OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT WAS CITED IN THIS
CONTEXT. ON THE EASTERN WATERS QUESTION, INDIA'S
UNCHANGED STAND IS THAT THIS IS A BILATERAL ISSUE BETWEEN
THE CONCERNED COUNTRIES.

3. PM DESAI AND PRESIDENT CARTER WILL ALSO REVIEW
RECENT INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS, INCLUDING THE CHANGE
OF GOVERNMENT IN AFGHANISTAN AND THE US SUSPICION OF
SOVIET ACTIVITY IN AFRICA. ON THESE TOPICS, THE BRIEFER
NOTED THAT "INDIA'S FACTS AND ASSESSMENTS...ARE NOT THE
SAME AS OF THE US" ("TIMES OF INDIA" ACCOUNT). THE
BRIEFER ALSO NOTED THAT BRITISH PM CALLAGHAN DID NOT
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AGREE WITH PRESIDENT CARTER'S VIEWS CONCERNING AFRICA.
BLOOD

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